that won't affect the availability of water that is there inside our country, because we have enough precipitation in between the borders of China and our country.

श्री विजय जे. दर्डा : क्योंकि इनका ओरिजिन तिब्बत से होता है और तिब्बत चाइना के क्षेत्र में है, ऐसी परिस्थिति में जो कुछ भी आप स्ट्रेटेजिक प्रोग्राम बना रहे हों, वह चेंज हो सकता है क्या ?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, our country is situated on the down-stream of the Brahamaputra river, and China is on the upstream. That won't affect, in any way, our country's interest. If the Chinese Government constructs any dam on the upstream, that won't affect anything in our country.

SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN : Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the linkage of the Brahamaputra river with the Ganga river would cause more harm to the Brahamaputra Valley during the rainy season. I am saying it because by blocking the flowing down of water, it may create severe harm than at present. That is my question. And, secondly, Sir, the Minister has said that without having any water treaty, the Government can do everything in the downstream. But, I think, it is not like this. It is necessary to have a Treaty in this regard.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, the hon. Member expressed an apprehension that the transfer of water from the Brahamaputra river to the Ganga river would affect the State of Assam more severely. But, I think, the whole thing is being studied by the Task Force; and certainly the Government of Assam will be taken into confidence before putting up this kind of mega project into operation in our county.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shrimati Ambika Soni. She is not present.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a very important question.

श्री सभापति : आप क्वेश्चन पूछ रहे हैं तो इम्पोर्टेंट ही होगा।

Inter-linking of Rivers by NWDA

*543. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :††

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Water Development agency has completed the pre-feasibility reports of the links;

(b) if so, whether the pre-feasibility reports of all the 30 possible links, 16 under the peninsular component and 14 under the Himalayan component, had been completed;

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††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy.

(c) by when all the detailed project reports will be prepared;

(d) at what stage the project is at present;

(e) whether the project will be completed as per schedule; and

(f) by when implementation of the project is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARN SETHI) : (a) to (f) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Inter-Linking of Rivers by NWDA

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Detailed Project Report are scheduled for completion by 31-12-2006.

(d) The project is at feasibility stage at present. National Water Development agency has completed feasibility reports of 8 links.

(e) and (f) Implementation and Scheduled completion of the project depends on various important issues such as cooperation from all the concerned States as well as from neighbouring Countries particularly. Nepal and Bhutan and availability of funds.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : The question deals with drought and flood. So, it is very important. In my question, I asked for 30 Links. But you have given reply that eight links are ready. What are the stages of balanced links? When will they be completed? In your reply, you have said that detailed project report will be completed by 2006. Is it not possible to complete it in advance in the interest of water resources linking in the country?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, the time-table has been drawn up by the Ministry of water Resources and it is now before the Task Force. The pre-feasibility study has been completed so far as 30 links are concerned. But the feasibility report has been completed with regard to eight links only. After feasibility study, we shall have a detailed feasibility report. For that purpose, the time-table has been drawn up. That feasibility report is in progress with regard to 16 links and a detailed feasibility project report will be [illegible] by 31-12-2006.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Linking of water resources involves not only our Government, but it is also linked with Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh Governments. It also requires availability of funds. Through you, I request the Government to give it a top priority. Besides the Minister of Water Resources, the Finance Minister must also give some time to this subject. How will the funds be raised—through ADB, World Bank or some other agency? The Ministry of External Affairs must work out with Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan for their cooperation.

The hon. Minister said in his reply that implementation depends on various important issues such as cooperation with concerned states and countries. Is the Government working towards this?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : We are making all out efforts to make this mega project successful. Whatever suggestions have been made by hon. Members, I will certainly consider and make them effective.

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA : Will the Government come forward to include completion of the first series of link between the Mahanadi and the Cauvery rivers and another link between west flowing Pamba Achankoil link to Vaippar providing a lifetime support to an arid zone in Tamil Nadu in the Tenth Plan period?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : All these links are included in the 30 links. These links will be effected, the moment feasibility and detailed feasibility studies are made ...*(Interruptions)* ....

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN : Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has consulted the concerned states before taking up this mega project?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Yes, I have already stated on the floor of this House, more than one, that before acting upon this mega project, we will take everybody into confidence; every State and every interested water experts will be consulted.

SHRI N.R. DASARI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is a very important issue, and I would request you to allow Half-an-Hour discussion on this subject I hope the Minister will also agree to my suggestion.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY : Sir, since most of the States in the southern part of the country are facing severe drought, year after year, I would like to know one thing from the hon. Minister. Out of these 30 links, 8 links are said to be feasible. What exactly is the estimated cost of these projects? Have you made any cost effective study in this regard? According to the answer given by the hon. Minister, the report will be ready by 31-12-2006. I would like to know whether, in view of the severe drought being faced by the Southern States, the Government proposes to take necessary steps to quicken the process.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, in order to mitigate the sufferings caused by floods and drought in the country, these projects have been designed. We will be sparing no effort to make them operational very soon; and I will certainly take into consideration the suggestion made by the hon. Member in this regard.

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक : श्रीमन्, अभी कुछ दिन पहले सरकार ने घोषित किया था कि माननीय सुरेश प्रभु की अध्यक्षता में एक कमेटी का गठन इस संदर्भ में किया गया है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि माननीय सुरेश प्रभु जी की अध्यक्षता में जो कमेटी गठित की गई है उसके टर्म्स ऑफ रिफरेंस क्या हैं और उसकी जांच या उसके संबंध में जो जानकारी उससे मांगी गई है उसकी प्रगति क्या है ?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, I would like to read out the terms of reference of the Task Force because it is a detailed one.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You send a copy to him.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : All right, Sir.

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक : श्रीमन्, यह तो बतला दें कि मुख्य रूप से उसके क्या टर्म्स ऑफ रिफरेंस हैं ?

श्री सभापति : सब हैं उसमें, मुख्य मुद्दे भी लिखे हैं।

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक : जिस बात की संभावनाएं माननीय मंत्री जी ने व्यक्त की हैं उसकी रिपोर्ट अलग है और इस समिति का गठन अलग है। इसलिए मैं जानना चाहता था कि यह जो गठन किया गया है उसका क्या मकसद है और उसका मुख्य उद्देश्य क्या है ?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, under the Chairmanship of the hon. member, Shri Suresh Prabhu, this Task Force has been constituted, and the terms of reference of this particular Task Force are as follows :—

To provide guidance on norms of appraisal of individual project in respect of economic viability, socio-economic impact, environmental impact and preparation of resettlement plans;

to devise suitable mechanism for bringing about speedy consensus amongst the states;

to priorities the different project components for preparation of detailed project reports and implementation;

to propose suitable organizational structure for implementing the project; and

consider various modalities for project funding and consider international dimensions that may be involved in some project components.

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक : इसकी रिपोर्ट कब तक आएगी ?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, as I have stated earlier, the detailed project report will be available by 2006.

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक : वह तो दूसरी कमेटी की रिपोर्ट की बात कही है आपने, इसकी थोड़ी कही है।

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, this is the Committee, which is going into the details of the project, and its report will be made available to the State Government by 2006.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU : Sir, in the past also, we had seen in this country that big plans were made and a lot of money was spent, and then after proceeding to a certain extent, we found that the entire project was unviable. So, in 2006, if the entire project is found unviable, how much money would have been spent by then on this project ? Have you any projection because we are a resource scarce country ?

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, there is a National Water Development Agency constituted under the Societies Act. This has been set up in the year 1982 and has been working since then. And this particular organization has studied it and prepared pre-feasibility reports. To expedite the process of a task force....

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU : No, Mr. Minister, just answer the question. You may please see the record of the Brahmaputra Board. They have prepared a project for producing 80,000 megawatts of electricity, and they have a detailed project report to the tune of 30,000 megawatts. So much of money has gone into the production of these reports, and ultimately, we do not have any funding linkage for implementing that. Similarly, this is such an ambitious project and we understand the kind of dislocation that will be there, both in terms of human settlement as well as ecology. You may please give me a projection of the amount of money that is going to be spent up to the year 2006 for preparation of the report.

MR. CHAIRMAN : This is imaginary. I think it is very difficult for the Minister to reply.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU : But this is the way we waste our scarce resources, Sir. अगर कोई फाइनेंसिंग प्लान नहीं है तो कैसे प्रोजेक्ट प्रिपेयर करेंगे ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Okay. Dr. Karan Singh.

DR. KARAN SINGH : Mr. Chairman Sir, I am constrained to strike a somewhat discordant note. Although the project appears to be a very grandiose and a very ambitious one, environmentalists in this country are deeply concerned and deeply disturbed that such a project, which is going to involve unbelievable environmental changes and human dislocation, has been accepted almost without a full debate. Will the hon. Minister assure the House that before he proceeds with such a gigantic project with all its implications, financial, ecological

and human, he will have a full-fledged debate; he will call environmentalists who are deeply concerned, talk with them, and then go ahead ? You are giving the impression that the project is going to be accepted regardless of anything. I think you should clarify this point.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, I would like to make one correction here. The Action Plan-I for this project, will be completed by April, 2003, and Action Plan-II will be completed by July, 2003.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU : But, unless the overall project is finalised, how can the Action Plans be finalised ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let him speak.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, let me answer the point the esteemed Member, Dr. Karan Singh has made. This particular task force has been appointed to go into the details of each and every aspect of the problem, ecological, environmental and sociological, etc. They will be going into every problem and moreover, whenever they submit the report to the Government, if possible it will be discussed on the floor of the House.

श्री नीलोत्पल बसु : सर, आपको हमें प्रोटैक्ट करना होगा क्योंकि पूरा प्रोजैक्ट अगर इनविसेज़ नहीं किया गया और उसकी वायबिलिटी अगर तय नहीं होगी तो उसके अलग-अलग सब-प्लान्स कैसे तय होंगे ? सर, ऐक्सपीरिएंस यह है कि अलग-अलग रिवर्स के जो वैली प्रोजैक्ट्स हैं जैसे दामोदर वैली प्रोजैक्ट्स इनकम्पलीट है, ब्रह्मपुत्र वैली प्रोजैक्ट इनकम्पलीट है, इससे तो पैसा फिज़ूलखर्च होता है।

श्री सभापति : पैसा खर्च होता है किन्तु अभी टास्क फोर्स की रिपोर्ट आएगी और उस पर गवर्नमेंट अध्ययन करेगी और उसके बाद ही असैसमेंट हो पाएगा।

श्री नीलोत्पल बसु : पूरी वायबिलिटी तय नहीं हुई तो 2006 तक कैसे तय हो जाएगा ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 544.

Merger of financial institutions

*544. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering merger of some leading financial institutions in the country;

(b) if so, the details in this regard alongwith the financial institutions identified for the proposed merger;

(c) the scope and contours envisaged for the new entity; and

(d) the factors necessitating such a merger ?